Upgradation of signalling system

*236. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the annual target set for modernizing the signalling system;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Railways have not been able to upgrade the signalling system as per the time-frame prescribed by the Khanna Committee;

(c) if so, the reasons for such delay;

(d) whether it is also a fact that the Railways is facing scarcity of engineers for such project; and

(e) if so, what steps are being taken to overcome such constraints?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI LALU PRASAD): (a) The annual targets set for four years for modernizing the Signalling Systems by provision of Panel/Electronic/ Route Relay Interlocking, along with Multi Aspect Colour Light Signalling is as follows:

Year	Target (No. of stations)
2004-05	300
2005-06	563
2006-07	594
2007-08	326

(b) and (c) In accordance with one of the major recommendations of the Khanna Committee, a non-lapsable Special Railway Safety Fund has been set up, in which 1448 stations have been sanctioned for replacement of overaged signalling assets with modern signalling system. As on September 2007, 1191 stations have been upgraded. However, there is some shortfall due to inadequate numbers of contractors and insufficient manufacturing capacities leading to shortages of materials and sharp increase in price of the metals leading to non-supply/non- finalization of tenders. Further, due to high growth of traffic in the last few years, there are constraints due to operational reasons also.

(d) and (e) With fast growth in infrastructure activity including of Signal & Telecom, there is additional demand and there is appreciable attrition too. The demand supply gap is being bridged through additional recruitments, improved productivity of existing men and deployment of men appropriately.

Accidents on unmanned level crossings

*237. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of accidents on the unmanned level crossings in the last three years;

(b) the steps taken by Government to reduce such accidents;

(c) whether Government proposes to reduce the number of unmanned level crossings; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?